

Letter Carrier Roger Steeber denies the “hero” designation, but no one else was similarly reluctant during a recent ceremony at the Irvine Post Office, located in Santa Ana District, where he works.

In front of assembled employees, as well as cameras from local television stations and a reporter and photographer from the Orange County Register, Officer-in-Charge Cindy Mastel spoke glowingly of the 35-year-veteran carrier; Orange County Fire

Authority division Chief Michael Moore gave Steeber credit for saving a life; and District Manager Gerry Ahern praised his heroism.

The reason for the celebration was Steeber’s actions in September of last year when he saw smoke billowing from a mobile home on his route and raced to the scene. Steeber noted that the resident’s vehicle was in the carport, so he banged on the door and shouted, rousing 79 year-old Karen Petersen from a dazed state. He entered the burning home to help her outside, and then returned for her walker before assisting her to safety with a neighbor across the street.

As Fire Chief Moore pointed out, mobile homes burn fast, so it was critical that Steeber arrived and took action when he did. “There is no doubt he saved her life,” Moore emphasized, explaining that Petersen would have soon been overcome by smoke if she had stayed inside any longer.

In addition to recognition from Chief Moore, Steeber was also honored by Chris Palmer, Deputy District Coordinator for **Congressman John Campbell** and by District Manager Gerry Ahern, who presented him with a certificate and two pieces of framed art in appreciation for his bravery and commitment to his customers.

“This is the second Irvine letter carrier in two years that I’ve had the pleasure of recognizing for rescuing customers,” Ahern observed. “It’s a reminder of the way our carriers care for their customers and their community. We at the Postal Service take great pride in that.”

Most touching, perhaps, was the presence and words of Karen Petersen's daughter, Diana Poivre. "I wanted to be here," said an emotional Poivre, "to tell Roger — on behalf of all of my mother's children and grandchildren — how very grateful we are that he took the initiative to risk his safety to save her life."

A former organist with 4 children, Petersen recalled the fire and how grateful she was to see Roger at her door. "He's such a nice person," she said. "He really did save my life."